

SPAUG

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# PrintScreen



Newsletter of the Stanford/Palo Alto Users Group for PC  
A Non-Profit / Educational Organization • <http://www.pa-spaug.org>  
Post Office Box 20161, Stanford, CA 94309-0161

## Notes from the Prez

by Jim Dinkey

If you are in the market for a Windows PC right now, here are the main Operating System choices I see you having to consider:

- **Windows 7**, the OS version currently being pushed by Microsoft. It's new, and, therefore, still buggy. My usual recommendation applies here—If you can, wait for MS to release Service Pack 1 (SP1), and then wait a few more months. If it holds to the usual Microsoft pattern, I expect it will be about two years before the bugs are down to a level I can tolerate.
- **Windows XP** has been out for several years. It's known and stable and at the Service Pack 3 stage. XP is my recommended choice, if you can find it. Also, if you can find it, expect to pay a premium price, currently about \$180, to have this proven performer on your PC. Be aware that Microsoft will stop selling or supporting XP on new netbooks on Oct 22, 2010...
- **Windows 8** is in the offing, still perhaps two years away from initial release for sale. The hot feature in Windows 8 is said to be 3D capability, which should make it desirable for

gamers and movie fans. The 3D capability means that Windows 8 will likely require hardware that is different in some ways from that required by Windows 7 or XP.

Where you might get aced is when you have some sort of failure and you need to buy a new computer—not just replace a hard drive. You may have to accept whatever Operating System is currently being pushed, or you can pay an exorbitant fee for an XP license, if one is available.

Currently, about 40% of the PCs in industry are still on Windows 2000, and another 50% are on Windows XP. Industry, generally, does not perceive any merit to upgrading, as long as their computers are doing the job needed.

### So, What do you do?

Ultimately, your Operating System decision will be governed by some or all of these conditions at the time you buy—

- Your personal style of pc usage (conservative versus bleeding-edge)
- Your perceived need(s).

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**General Meeting @ American Legion Post—Wed. August 11 @ 7:15 PM**  
**347 First Street, Los Altos (directions on page 3)**

**Optional Dinner at Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main Street Los Altos**  
**One block west from American Legion Hall, 5:45 pm (see page 3)**

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- Product specifications.
- Product availability.
- Cost—both \$\$ and time.

**If you're not a bleeding-edge PC user**, and you don't feel a need for 3D capability—but are using your PC as a basic tool for internet access, email, web surfing, spreadsheet calculations, simple editing of text and graphics, etc.:

- A new computer you buy today will probably come with Windows 7 as its OS.
- If you can still find a PC with Windows XP, I recommend getting that one.
- If you get a Windows 7 machine, you may want to consider spending the extras bucks to get Windows XP installed on it, so you can enjoy XP's relative reliability and not have to be part of Microsoft's unpaid QA group. In this situation, you might want to consider virtualization as the way to run XP.

**If you are a bleeding-edge PC-user**, your consideration is: Should I take a chance and get a Windows 7 computer whose hardware has 3D capability, hoping that some part of Windows 7 might accept some of what's predicted/expected for Windows 8.

I think that some third party should be able to beat Microsoft by producing a good 3D product for a Windows 7 load on hardware that emulates the Windows 8's requirements. It will be interesting to see whether or not the prediction comes to pass.

### Dealing With Your Data

I hope your computer's entire data are backed up in a way that lets you move your data to a new computer or to a new HDD in your current computer.

Most computers that need reloading are victims of malware or of software gone bad – often because the owner did not realize how to maintain the computer or how to run corrective routines in a timely manner.

### Creating a backup strategy

The better your backup strategy the better will be your odds of successfully restoring your data (and system) with the least amount of hassle. A well-planned backup strategy provides:

- the ability to restore a computer by restoring the entire "C" partition.
- the ability to select files or directories to be restored when you've made a mistake.
- Several iterations of backup data from which to choose. If you don't know what is wrong and you need to just save your current data and then restore the computer system to one of several recent days, you need to set yourself up with a week's worth of images to permit you to select a recent backup for a complete restore.

### Implementing your backup strategy

1. Create a procedure (perhaps involving Acronis True Image) to make a backup onto a different physical hard drive than the one you're backing up from, such that after a week, every day of the week is represented. This will produce seven backups – one for each day of the week.
2. Set the backup program to overlay the corresponding backup with the newest one. For example, overlay the existing Tuesday backup with your new Tuesday backup.
3. Have the backup occur automatically, at a time that will not interfere with your normal operation. Mine occurs at 1 am.—and in hundreds of operations, I have been aware of it only once.

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## Meeting Day: Wednesday, August 11

### General Meeting

**American Legion Post  
347 First Street, Los Altos**

**Meeting time is 7:15 pm**

**Judy Baker, Ph.D.,**  
Dean of CTIS Division, Foothill College  
Speaking about:  
**Computer Instruction at  
Foothill College**

The American Legion Post is in downtown Los Altos, on the North (bay) side of First Street, between San Antonio and Main Street. It's directly across First Street from Draeger's Market.

The American Legion Post does not have its own parking lot. All off-street parking close to the hall is private, and only for use by customers or tenants of the respective properties. The closest public parking is on the street and in the public lot West of the hall, behind the Main Street businesses. Consider carrying a flashlight, it's dark in downtown Los Altos after our meeting.

Our meeting place is the back room of the AL Post, directly accessible via a door on the West side of the building.

### Typical Meeting Agenda

- 7:15 "Boot up"
- 7:30 Announcements.
- 7:35 Guests introduction.
- 7:40 Random Access (Crosstalk)
- 7:50 Break
- 8:00 SPEAKER
- 9:15 SIG Reports
- 9:20 Raffle
- 9:30 Adjourn

### Optional pre-meeting no-host dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

#### *Aldo Los Altos*

388 Main Street, Los Altos; (650) 949-2300

**website:** <http://www.aldolosalto.com/>

**directions:** One block west from American Legion Post

**map:** <http://tinyurl.com/6hm3ga>

**menu:** <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Menu.php>

**reviews:** <http://www.aldolosalto.com/Recognition.html>

**Dinner time is 5:45 pm**

"Contemporary  
Italian Food With  
International  
Infusion."

"This is not  
your daddy's  
spaghetti joint!"

—website

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4. Set up another procedure (probably also using Acronis True Image) to create “strings” of backups, with one **incremental** backup each day. Start a new “string” of backups once a month – using a new date. in the file name.

This will create a series of “strings” that get progressively older; when the backup destination disk becomes nearly full, deleting one or more strings will provide space for later strings to be added as they are created.

This method has worked well for me in an industrial environment wherein when there is a problem, and it is reported within a week of sensing that there is a problem is, a 15-minute restore can often fix the problem and return the computer to useful operation. If it’s been over a week, the use of incremental restores is required..

### PCmover eases file transfers

When your have to move to a new computer, PCmover from Laplink  
< <http://www.laplink.com/pcmover> > or  
< <http://tinyurl.com/35qe2ze> > provides an interesting assist that can be used. It consists of a special USB cable that connects two working computers together and the software that transfers data, and some programs, from one computer to another. It’s slow, but effective – especially if you only need to do the job once. I just bought two for under \$13 each in case I get bit. The license is good for one computer.

### Virtualization

Virtualization is a proven and effective way to experiment with a new operating system while still running your own old operating system.

A virtualization setup is a great way to test just about anything. You can try three or four

photo programs without having to install and uninstall each one and then having to deal with any junk left behind.

Further, installing a whole set of photo editors (for example) means that the winner can then be installed onto your real computer and there will be no clutter of other programs to have to overcome.

If you want to have all of the programs available even though they would all fight for the same resources, usually hardware, then virtualization is a way to accomplish having lots of choices for different requirements.

Here are some virtualization products for your consideration” <http://tinyurl.com/2ete9gu>

### Even I have computer problems!

Something was wiping out my desktop layout, so I went to the net and found a program that saved my icon positions for future use.

*[Editor’s Note: I don’t know what program Jim found, but here are some that (claim they) can save and restore desktop icon arrangements:*

- *I have PTBSync: <http://www.netcult.ch/elmue/ElmueSoft-en.htm>*
- *Snapfiles lists some others: <http://tinyurl.com/2qmb6a>*
- *Here’s the Google search: <http://tinyurl.com/2btzh7u> ]*

Further, my computer was starting up lots of needed programs and taking a long time, so I installed a delayer that starts selected programs after a few minutes. The printer program is one of the programs I delayed, since I generally don’t need it for a while after rebooting. My only complaint is that the number of programs offered to be delayed is too scanty.

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**[Editor's Note: I don't know what program Jim found, but here are some startup managers:**

- *I have Codestuff Starter:* <http://www.snapfiles.com/get/starter.html>
- *Snapfiles also lists other startup managers:* <http://tinyurl.com/2vn5d86>
- *Here's the Google search:* <http://tinyurl.com/2anq7we>

**How to prepare for a service call or a clinic visit:**

Review your supporting materials to prepare for the inevitable visit for support. This is a list of essentials which will make the trip much more productive:

1. Your original key for Windows.
2. Your original Windows CD.
3. Any other program CDs, along with their keys.
4. A Belarc Advisor listing of the computer's hardware and software. Get Belarc Advisor via <http://tinyurl.com/2dkcmul>.
5. All of your backup hard drives.
6. A written list of what you want accomplished. This will assure you don't forget to mention them, and also may allow the technician to resolve several items at once.

### **Planning Meeting Minutes July 21, 2010 by John Sleeman**

**Present at planning meeting were:**

Jim Dinkey, John Buck, Bev Altman, Robert Mitchell, John Sleeman.

**Review of July 14 meeting was mixed.**

Some thought it was useful and informative; others that it was dull.

**Speakers scheduled through January 2011 were reviewed.** Dan Gallo had no defined topic, and was assigned "What's new in the market?".

**Bev reported that membership is basically stable,** although we have lost a couple of members this month. She has \$556 from the last meeting to send to the treasurer.

**Jim Dinkey reported that the projector was fixed for about \$200,** and we had two original bulbs returned.

**Robert is continuing work on the club history,** and still needs some input on style and grammar. Also still awaiting Jim Dinkey's essay, which is half complete. Robert will be away Aug 11 through Sept 1.

**The Elks Lodge may open again in September.** We don't know if or when the club might return there.

**Jim reported that his clinic is back in operation,** but not much used.

Owing to a possible large discount at Staples, John Sleeman was authorized to spend \$200 on **door prizes**, for the next two months.

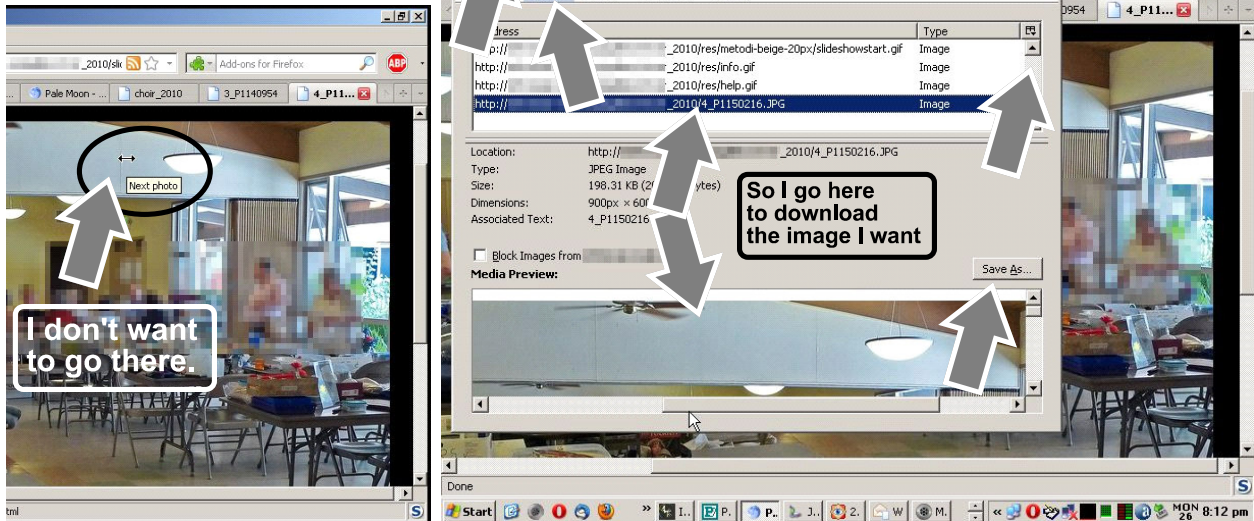
### **Filler**

**by John Buck**

**Pale Moon (a FireFox clone)**—Recent versions of Firefox browser, beginning after 3.6.3, have slowed my machine's internet dealings down to somewhere between a crawl

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and a dead stop. After trying Maxthon and Avant browsers, I decided to check out Pale Moon when it showed up on Snapfiles as a FF alternative/clone. Check it out via Snapfiles < <http://tinyurl.com/249msd4> > or Google < <http://tinyurl.com/239lapc> >.

FF and Pale Moon (PM) have a capability I haven't seen in my other browsers. There are sites that, either intentionally or inadvertently, make it difficult to download images they display. On my church website, for instance, the main photo on a gallery page may be blocked by something that only allows me to go to the next page. In FF and PM, I can easily work around that block by going to Tools/ Page Info/Media, and scrolling down the list of images until I find the one I want, and then saving it. (See graphic at top of this page.)

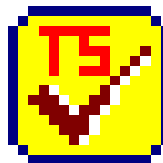
**Free Download Manager.**—My heretofore favorite, Star Downloader Free, doesn't seem to want to deal with Avast (52+ MB), so I decided to search Snapfiles for an alternate/successor. Free Download Manager < <http://tinyurl.com/laghj> > was near the top of the "Popularity" sort < <http://tinyurl.com/2fw5b74> >.

**Online file-conversion services**—Suppose someone sends you a file that you lack the software to handle. Or, suppose you have data files created by software you no longer have available. You may not be out of luck. There seem to be a fair number of websites that offer file conversions from one type to another. For example here's a search for publisher (pub) to pdf converters—<http://tinyurl.com/yf6z9ta>.

The generic search string is [ file conversion service online <filetype1> <filetype2>], where you replace the "<filetype\*>" strings with the extensions of interest.

*Caveat: I haven't tried any online file conversion service, but I think it's good to know how I might find one, when needed.*

**Tinyspell**—When you need a spell-checker, but there's none available in the program or site you're working in, try using Tinyspell. It's small, unobtrusive, and free. < <http://tinyurl.com/gfqng> >.



I have set Tinyspell to load, disabled, at startup. When I want to use it, I enable it via its System Tray icon.



## August 2010 SPAUG News

SPAUG CALENDAR						
Always subject to change; verify event with host or Jim Dinkey						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	2 7–9 pm BIYSIG Micro Center		4			7—Clinic, by appointment only
	9 7–9 pm WinSIG Micro Center		11 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Aldo Los Altos, 388 Main, LA 7:30 pm General Meeting Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St, LA <b>Speaker:</b> Judy Baker, Ph.D.			14—Clinic, by appointment only
	16 7–9 pm DISIG Micro Center		18 7:15 pm Planning Meeting, Bev Altman’s			21—Clinic, by appointment only
	23 7–9 pm WebSIG Micro Center		25			28—Clinic, by appointment only

### Saturday Clinic

Clinics usually are held when needed. **Call Jim Dinkey** to make a reservation. The clinics are to help you unscrew your Windows XP.

Email: jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or call 650-493-9307 for an appointment.

### Planning Meeting

Planning meetings are usually held on the **third Wednesday** of each month at Beverly Altman’s home at 7:15 pm. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend. **Please phone Jim Dinkey or Bev Altman to confirm venue.**

**Next meeting:** Wednesday, **August 18, 2010 at 7:15 pm, at Bev Altman’s home.**

### SIGS

***NOTE: SPAUG-member participation in any of these SIGS requires membership in SVCS, currently \$12/yr. SVCS is not a part of SPAUG.***

- **Build It Yourself SIG**—1st Monday each month, at Micro Center, Santa Clara
- **WinSIG**—2nd Monday of the month, at Micro Center in Santa Clara
- **DISIG**—3rd Monday of the month, at Micro Center in Santa Clara
- **WebSIG**—4th Monday of each month, 7–9 pm, at Micro Center in Santa Clara

**For more info about these SIGs, go to [svuga.org](http://svuga.org)**

SPAUG  
PO Box 20161  
STANFORD CA 94309-0161

**August 2010**

**First Class Mail**

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## **General Meeting—Wed. August 11, 7:15 PM**

*Amer. Legion Post, 347 First St., Downtown Los Altos, across from Draeger's (betw. San Antonio and Main)*

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### **Listserver**

**spaug-list at svpal.org**

Any member on the spaug-list can send messages to all other members on the list automatically by sending e-mail to this address. This list is intended for announcements of interest to all SPAUG members. Please avoid excessive or trivial announcements, since some members are paying for connect time. Additions or corrections can be sent to:  
**info at pa-spaug.org**

**The SPAUG Web Page  
is available at  
<http://www.pa-spaug.org>**

**hosted by**

**www.  
svpal.org/**





# PC USER GROUP Meeting

**WEDNESDAY**

**Aug 11**

**7:15 PM**

**American Legion Post, 347 First Street, Los Altos**

Hosted by: SPAUG (Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC)

## *Topic:* **Computer Instruction at Foothill College**

**Speaker: Judy Baker, Ph.D.,** Dean of CTIS Division, Foothill Coll.  
< <http://www.foothill.edu/fga> >, < <http://grou.ps/oercenter> >

Dr. Judy Baker is dean of the distance learning program at Foothill College and will take over as dean of the **Computer, Technology, and Information Sciences (CTIS)** Division in August. She also spearheads an award-winning national project that provides students with free and low-cost textbooks.

The Foothill College CTIS Division provides two online Associate of Science degrees:

- Computer Software Development and
- Database Management.

Foothill's day, evening, weekend, and online courses span all aspects of computing—from

beginning to advanced. Learn employable skills in • Enterprise Networking, • Internet Technology, • Computer Software Development, • Interactive & Multimedia Technology, • BioInformatics, • Database Management, • Video and Computer Game Design and much more.

Foothill also has an array of short courses designed to bring you quickly up to speed in the use of a variety of technologies.

Dr. Baker will share information about the free computer textbooks, the \*open textbook\* movement, and how to get involved.

You are invited to join us for an optional no-host dinner before our meeting, at **5:45 pm**, at **Aldo Los Altos**, 388 Main Street, Los Altos, One block West from American Legion Post

Upcoming meetings: (2010): **8/11**, 9/8, 10/13, 11/10

(2011): 1/12, 2/9, 3/9, 4/13, 5/11, 6/8, 7/13

**SPAUG — Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC**

**PO Box 20161, STANFORD CA 94309-0161**

**<http://www.pa-spaug.org> OR <http://svuga.org/>**

**Jim Dinkey, President, 650-493-9307 jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com**

**Dues: \$35 for 12 months**

# STANFORD PALO ALTO USER GROUP FOR PC (SPAUG)

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

To become a member of SPAUG—

1. Provide the information requested on this form.
2. Send this form and a check for \$35.00, payable to **SPAUG**, to the address on the right:

**SPAUG**  
**PO BOX 20161**  
**Stanford, CA 94309-0161**

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last, First

Your mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Number and Street, PO Box, etc.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, ZIP

e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ (Area Code) Number  
Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ (Area Code) Number

Areas of expertise you would be willing to share with SPAUG:

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Areas of special interest:

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What are you hoping to find in SPAUG?

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How did you learn about SPAUG? \_\_\_\_\_

Your Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTE:

Bring a printout of our online Membership information page < <http://www.pa-spaug.org/main.htm#newmember> > to a meeting, and you can join SPAUG for \$30 for your first year of membership, a saving of \$5 off the regular membership rate!